Design and Access Statement

Change of Use Application September 2017

Introduction

This proposal is for the change of use of Herrington Gate Furniture's former showroom at Toad Hall and its internal conversion into a one bedroomed self contained dwelling. In recent years the company has constructed a brand new facility in Houghton-le-Spring large enough to accommodate additional staff and larger showroom. Subsequently there has been a gradual transfer of staff and activities away from the showroom in East Boldon. In anticipation of this in 2010 a change of use planning application was submitted to convert the showroom into a dwelling.

Planning History

Planning consent was secured in summer 2010 for the change into a dwelling, however due to a longer than anticipated caused by the economic downturn the conversion and change of use could not be implemented within the time constraints of the consent.

In 2012 an opportunity to supplement the companies earnings during a difficult period arose in the form of a potential short-medium term tenant for the building. An application was required to accommodate the proposed use and one was submitted and approved to use the building as a bridal wear showroom. However shortly after consent was secured the negotiations with the potential tenant sadly came to a close without a deal being formulated.

Use

Ultimately the full transfer of staff and facilities from Toad Hall to the new facilities at Houghton-le-Spring was not complete until late 2014.

Subsequently the building has remained in the ownership of Herrington Gate but only in occasional use for its purposes as the building was left fitted out as a luxury kitchen showroom albeit one with no regular staff presence.

In 2017 the circumstances are now more favourable for implemented the change and should consent for the use as a dwelling be secured once more it is anticipated that it would be implemented very early in 2018 as a resident has been identified to live in the property.

Amount

From the outset of the thoughts about Toad Halls future use it was felt important that the footprint of any new dwelling be no larger than that of the existing Toad Hall building thus affording the most straightforward and sustainable recycling of the existing building fabric.

As is currently the case in its existing use, due to the very compact footprint of the existing building, in order to provide adequate internal area it has been necessary to utilise the roof space as storage.

Layout

Toad Hall sits in its own small grounds on a attractive site elevated from the main road which is well concealed by both a set back from the main building line, boundary treatments and soft landscaping. Its former use as a showroom for Herrington Gate Furniture and the main workplace for 4 employees of the company resulted in the main aspect of the building facing north towards the main road. Therefore its main entrance and the majority of its fenestration are orientated to the north.

To the north of the site lies the busy main road and car park lay by on Front Street A184 through East Boldon.

To the east of the site lies a row of existing two storey dwellings also orientated onto Front street.

To the south and west of the site lies an area of courtyard garage car parking serving the dwellings of the local dwellings of the orchard.

The site is accessed from the highway by an existing gated pedestrian entrance to the east of the site. There are currently no car parking facilities available at Toad Hall, the staff members currently relying on on street parking during working hours. The site of Toad Hall doesn't offer any opportunities for the provision of off street parking due to its elevated topography over Front Street.

Scale

The existing Toad Hall building is a modest single storey building with a pitched roof with an internal floor area of 42m.

The proposed one bedroom dwelling, due to having only internal alterations, has the same external dimensions as noted above.

Landscaping

There are no landscaping changes proposed to the site as it already features attractive hard and soft landscaping, a patio area, trees and shrubs well suited to the grounds of a small dwelling.

Appearance

The building was originally designed to have a scale, charm and materiality worthy of its position in the conservation area. Small dormer windows, generous roof overhangs, sash windows, chimney and traditional detailing were some of the devices used to achieve this. Similarly stone heads and sills are used around openings and large quoins to the corners of the building reinforce the traditional appearance. These features are of particular importance to the north elevation which can be seen from the road. The existing building without any external modification is considered as being of a high quality residential scale and appearance.

The materials featured throughout the building include traditional handmade facing brickwork, stone quions and sills, timber painted fascias/soffits and a natural slate roof. The windows are timber framed, painted white.

Access

Vehicular and Transport Links

Due to the small scale of the dwelling there is considered to be no opportunity to improve the current access provisions either vehicular or pedestrian. However due to the limited number of potential domestic residents compared to the number of employees currently at the site the pressure on car parking space availability would inevitably be reduced by the change of use. Residents or visitors of the dwelling will rely on the existing on street car parking facilities to the north for journeys by car. New residents of the proposal would however be free to enjoy the strong existing public transport links on Front street and public footpath infrastructure available to access the many local shops and facilities available in the immediate vicinity meaning that there would potentially little need to rely on a car in order to reside in the dwelling.

Inclusive access

As is currently the case, the pedestrian access to the site will be made via the existing east gate to the site and steps up to the buildings main entrance. There is insufficient space to provide ramped facilities to the main entrance but the building could be converted to feature a level access threshold if required.